Classroom Assessment Techniques

Teaching Tuesday Session
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Objectives

▪ Define the purpose of classroom assessment techniques (CATs) and articulate their role in learning outcomes assessment

▪ Discern which CAT to use for several common learning outcomes, namely retention, application, and synthesis & creative thinking

▪ Identify CATs you’re using and develop new CATS to use in the classes you teach
Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

- Typically non-graded, in-class assessments
- Gives the instructor regular (formative) feedback about student learning
- Provides insight into day-to-day learning gains
- Helps students gauge their own learning and cues them to modify their study strategies
Choosing the right CAT

- The techniques work best with certain learning goals
- Grouped according to McKeachie’s (1986) categories of cognition
  - I selected three distinct levels of learning: retention, application, and synthesis/creative thinking
- Strategies summarized in Angelo & Cross’ (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques*
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Techniques for...

- Assessing prior knowledge, recall, & comprehension
  - Background knowledge probe
  - Focused listing
  - Misconception/Preconception check
  - Empty outlines
  - Memory matrix
  - Minute paper
  - Muddiest point
Knowledge, Recall, & Comprehension

- **Background knowledge probe**
  - Example: Please put a check next to all of the following Shakespearean plays you have seen or read...
  - Example: Interpret the following image of a voltmeter
  - Example: What does listening mean? (polleverywhere.com)
  - Example: To what extent do you agree with this statement about male and female communication styles? (polleverywhere.com)

- **Focused listing**
  - Example: Write a statement that describes “work” in physics
  - Example: Now that you’ve seen images of Persian art, write a few statements describing Persian culture

![Poll Results](image)
Knowledge, Recall, & Comprehension

- Misconception/Preconception check
  - Example: Students answer questionnaire on how various STDs are transmitted and asks for a Likert style assessment of how certain they are of their answers
  - Example: Open ended prompt—How many people lived in North America by 1491? How long had they lived on this continent by 1491?

- Empty outlines
  - Example: instructional video on PowerPoint best practices for business presentations. Empty outline helps students follow along with main points
Knowledge, Recall, & Comprehension

- Memory matrix
  - Example: ask students to give examples of irregular and regular Spanish verb endings (two rows for reg/irregular, and columns for -ar, -er, -ir endings)
  - Example: Styles of art (neoclassical, impressionist, postimpressionist, expressionist) in rows, countries in columns, and students give examples of major artists for each style in various countries

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Knowledge, Recall, & Comprehension

- **Minute paper**
  - Example: “What is the most important thing you learned during this class? What question remains unanswered?”
  - Example: “What is the most significant reason Italy became a center of the Renaissance?”

- **Muddiest point**
  - Example: What is the “muddiest” concept on the review sheet?
Share your CAT, Adopt a New CAT

- In groups of about 2-3, share one knowledge/recall/comprehension CAT you are already using.
- Create a new CAT using one of these strategies you aren’t yet using.
Techniques for...

- Assessing skill in application and performance
  - Directed paraphrasing
  - Application cards
  - Student generated test questions
  - Class modeling
Assessing Skill in Application & Performance

- Directed paraphrasing
  - Example: Explain in plain language and in less than five minutes, what you know about this computer virus, for a VP of a large insurance firm who is responsible for database security. Your aim is to convince her to spend time and money “revaccinating” hundreds of computers.

- Application cards
  - Example: Use the concepts CL, O, and Clalt to assess a current or past romantic relationship
Assessing Skill in Application & Performance

- Student generated test questions
  - Example: Kate Simcox Jeopardy
- Class modeling
  - After oral communication students read about the communication process, I ask them to work with a small group to perform a model of what the communication process is like. Students might create dramatic gestures, enact a tennis match, demonstrate multicomunication using technology, etc. and the class generates observations of what the communication process is like based on the models.
Share your CAT, Adopt a New CAT

▪ In groups of about 2-3, share one application CAT you are already using.

▪ Create a new CAT using one of these strategies you aren’t yet using.
Techniques for...

- Assessing skill in synthesis and creative thinking
  - One sentence summary
  - Word journal
  - Approximate analogies
  - Concept maps
  - Invented dialogues
  - Annotated portfolios
Assessing skill in synthesis and creative thinking

- One sentence summary
  - Example: Write a summary of each of the five steps in the nursing process (assessing, diagnosing, planning, implementing, evaluating)
  - Example: In one sentence, summarize Symbolic Interactionism Theory.

- Word journal
  - Example: In a lesson on Plato’s Socratic dialogues, students word journaled and shared their chosen words and explanations. The instructor used these as a starting point for class discussion.
Assessing skill in synthesis and creative thinking

- Approximate analogies

- Concept maps

*Dr. Paris* would often write large concepts on the chalkboards around the room and have students come up and write synonyms to that concept or place/situations where that concept is demonstrated. This led to class discussion. She would also bring in magazines and divide students into groups to take only pictures from the magazines and glue them to a separate paper using only pictures and their word to demonstrate their understanding or examples of a concept.
Assessing skill in synthesis and creative thinking

- Invented dialogues

- Annotated portfolios
  - Example: Sophomore art students from a drawing course were asked to select samples from a portfolio in order to demonstrate their grasp of line, form, shading, and perspective, and wrote explanations of how the work illustrated these concepts.
Share your CAT, Adopt a New CAT

- In groups of about 2-3, share one synthesis/creative thinking CAT you are already using.
- Create a new CAT using one of these strategies you aren’t yet using.
YOU'RE AWESOME

THANK YOU!